Auction of oil and gas blocks

4062. SHRI RAJIV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to auction a large number of new oil and natural gas exploration blocks over the next two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the total estimated yield of crude oil and gas respectively from these blocks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) With a view to attract private investment including foreign investment for exploration and exploitation of Hydrocarbon resources in the 26 sedimentary basins of the country covering onland and offshore areas, the Government has been inviting bids from private companies on a regular basis since, 1991. To give further impetus to the exploration efforts, the Government has formulated the New exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) which provides equal opportunities and a level playing field to foreign companies and Indian companies, both Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and private companies to bid for exploration acreages, offered by the Government from time to time. Exploration activities including identification and offer of blocks through NELP is a continuous and ongoing process. The Government of India, on 23rd February, 2006, has offered 55 blocks comprising of 24 deep water, 6 shallow water and 25 onshore blocks under the sixth round of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-VI). The bid closing date for these blocks is 15th September, 2006. These are exploration blocks where exploration of oil and gas is proposed to be carried out. The exploration period for these blocks is 7-8 years. Being exploration blocks, oil and gas reserves have to be established through exploration, hence any estimation of reserves would be pre-mature.

LPG Distributors at Jashpurnagar

4063. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 3709 given in Rajya Sabha on 26th April, 2005 and state:

(a) the date on which survey for LPG distribution agency was conducted in Jashpurnagar, the sole district headquarter of Chhattisgarh deprived of LPG distribution facility alongwith the date on which it was found fit;

(b) the dates on which selection process was conducted after giving adverstisement for the distribution agency;

(c) the names of persons who were given the distribution agency and the dates on which it was given; and

(d) the details of action taken and progress made for providing agency by October, 2005 to 14 districts out of 16 that are deprived of distribution agency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) LPG distributorship at Jashpurnagar, District Headquarter Town in Chhattisgarh has been rostered in favour of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) in Marketing Plan 1996-98 under Freedom Fighter (Women) category. Accordingly, an adverstisement was released for appointment of a LPG distributor for the above location in the year 1998 and was re-adverstised on 31.8.2000 against which only one application was received. Interview was held on 1.10.2003 at Raipur but no eligible candidate was found. The location was again advertised on 21.2.2004 but no response was received.

(d) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) supply domestic LPG through their distribution network and have the freedom to set up LPG distributorships at viable locations as per their commercial considerations. The setting up of LPG distributorships is a continuous process and involves identification of suitable locations, arranging land for setting up of godown, obtaining various statutory clearances, etc.

As on 31.3.2005, 16 district headquarters, did not have any LPG distributorships of OMCs. Out of these, 2 district headquarter towns, namely, Sindhudurg Nagri, District Sindhudurg, Maharashtra and Mongon, District North Sikkim, Sikkim are not viable for sustaining an independent distributorship and are being serviced by the nearby LPG distributors. Out of the remaining 14 district headquarter towns, 2 distributorships of IOCL were commissioned during the year 2005-06 at Anni, District Dibang Valley in Arunachal Pradesh and Namchi, District South Sikkim in Sikkim. OMCs have reported that the cases for setting up of LPG distributorships at the balance 12 district headquarter locations are at various stages.